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REMARKS

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MR. MOORE'S NOTICES

OF

LORD BYRON'S LIFE.

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RICHARD TAYLOR, PRINTER,
RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.

I HAVE disregarded various publications in which facts within my own knowledge have been grossly misrepresented; but I am called upon to notice some of the erroneous statements proceeding from one who claims to be considered as Lord Byron's confidential and authorized friend. — Domestic details ought not to be intruded on the public attention; if, however, they *are* so intruded, the persons affected by them have a right to refute injurious charges. Mr. Moore has promulgated his own impressions of private events in which I was most nearly concerned, as if he pos-

sessed a competent knowledge of the subject. Having survived Lord Byron, I feel increased reluctance to advert to any circumstances connected with the period of my marriage ; nor is it now my intention to disclose them, further than may be indispensably requisite for the end I have in view. Self-vindication is not the motive which actuates me to make this appeal, and the spirit of accusation is unmingled with it: but when the conduct of my Parents is brought forward in a disgraceful light, by the passages selected from Lord Byron's letters, and by the remarks of his Biographer,—I feel bound to justify their characters from imputations which I *know* to be false. The passages from Lord Byron's letters to which I refer, are,—

The aspersion on my mother's character, *p.* 648, *l.* 4.—“ My child is very well and flourishing I hear ; but I must see also. I feel no disposition to resign it to *the contagion of its grandmother's society.*”

The assertion of her dishonourable conduct in employing a spy, *p.* 645, *l.* 7, &c. “A Mrs. C. (now a kind of housekeeper and *a spy of Lady N’s.*) who, in her better days, was a washer-woman, is supposed to be—by the learned—very much the occult cause of our domestic discrepancies.”

The seeming exculpation of myself in the extract, *p.* 646, with the words immediately following it,—“Her nearest relatives are *a*——;” where the blank clearly implies something too offensive for publication.

These passages tend to throw suspicion on my parents, and give reason to ascribe the separation either to their direct agency, or to that of “officious spies” employed by them.*

From the following part of the narra-

* “The officious spies of his privacy.”—*p.* 650.

tive, *p.* 642, it must also be inferred that an undue influence was exercised by them for the accomplishment of this purpose. “It was in a few weeks after the latter communication between us, (Lord Byron and Mr. Moore) that Lady Byron adopted the determination of parting from him. She had left London at the latter end of January on a visit to her father’s house, in Leicestershire, and Lord Byron was in a short time to follow her. They had parted in the utmost kindness,—she wrote him a letter full of playfulness and affection, on the road, and immediately on her arrival at Kirkby Mallory, her father wrote to acquaint Lord Byron that she would return to him no more.”

In my observations upon this statement, I shall, as far as possible, avoid touching on any matters relating personally to Lord Byron and myself. The facts are,—I left London for Kirkby Mallory, the residence

of my father and mother, on the 15th of January, 1816. Lord Byron had signified to me in writing (Jan. 6th.) his absolute desire that I should leave London on the earliest day that I could conveniently fix. It was not safe for me to undertake the fatigue of a journey sooner than the 15th.

Previously to my departure, it had been strongly impressed on my mind, that Lord Byron was under the influence of insanity. This opinion was derived in a great measure from the communications made to me by his nearest relatives and personal attendant, who had more opportunities than myself of observing him during the latter part of my stay in town. It was even represented to me that he was in danger of destroying himself. *With the concurrence of his family* I had consulted Dr. Baillie as a friend (Jan. 8th.) respecting this supposed malady. On acquainting him with the state of the case, and with Lord Byron's

desire that I should leave London, Dr. Baillie thought that my absence might be advisable as an experiment, *assuming* the fact of mental derangement; for Dr. Baillie, not having had access to Lord Byron, could not pronounce a positive opinion on that point. He enjoined that in correspondence with Lord Byron I should avoid all but light and soothing topics. Under these impressions, I left London determined to follow the advice given by Dr. Baillie. Whatever might have been the nature of Lord Byron's conduct towards me from the time of my marriage, yet, supposing him to be in a state of mental alienation, it was not for *me*, nor for any person of common humanity, to manifest, at that moment, a sense of injury. On the day of my departure, and again on my arrival at Kirkby, Jan. 16th, I wrote to Lord Byron in a kind and cheerful tone, according to those medical directions.—The last letter was circulated, and em-

ployed as a pretext for the charge of my having been subsequently *influenced* to “desert*” my husband. It has been argued that I parted from Lord Byron in perfect harmony ; that feelings, incompatible with any deep sense of injury had dictated the letter which I addressed to him ; and that my sentiments must have been changed by persuasion and interference, when I was under the roof of my parents. These assertions and inferences are wholly destitute of foundation.

When I arrived at Kirkby Mallory, my parents were unacquainted with the existence of any causes likely to destroy my prospects of happiness ; and when I communicated to them the opinion which had been formed concerning Lord Byron’s state of mind, they were most anxious to promote his restoration by every means in their power. They assured those rela-

*—“the deserted husband.” *p.* 651.

tions who were with him in London, that “they would devote their whole care and attention to the alleviation of his malady,” and hoped to make the best arrangements for his comfort, if he could be induced to visit them. With these intentions my mother wrote on the 17th. to Lord Byron, inviting him to Kirkby Mallory. She had always treated him with an affectionate consideration and indulgence, which extended to every little peculiarity of his feelings. Never did an irritating word escape her lips in her whole intercourse with him.

The accounts given me after I left Lord Byron by the persons in constant intercourse with him, added to those doubts which had before transiently occurred to my mind, as to the reality of the alleged disease; and the reports of his medical attendant were far from establishing the existence of any thing like lunacy. Under this uncertainty, I deemed it right to com-

municate to my parents, that if I were to consider Lord Byron's past conduct as that of a person of sound mind, nothing could induce me to return to him. It therefore appeared expedient both to them and myself, to consult the ablest advisers. For that object, and also to obtain still further information respecting the appearances which seemed to indicate mental derangement, my mother determined to go to London. She was empowered by me to take legal opinions on a written statement of mine, though I had then reasons for reserving a part of the case from the knowledge even of my father and mother.

Being convinced by the result of these inquiries, and by the tenor of Lord Byron's proceedings, that the notion of insanity was an illusion, I no longer hesitated to authorize such measures as were necessary, in order to secure me from being ever again placed in his power. Conformably with

this resolution my father wrote to him on the 2nd of February to propose an amicable separation. Lord Byron at first rejected this proposal ; but when it was distinctly notified to him, that if he persisted in his refusal, recourse must be had to legal measures, he agreed to sign a deed of separation.—Upon applying to Dr. Lushington, who was intimately acquainted with all the circumstances, to state in writing what he recollected upon this subject, I received from him the following letter, by which it will be manifest that my mother cannot have been actuated by any hostile or ungenerous motives towards Lord Byron.

“ My dear Lady Byron,

“ I can rely upon the accuracy of my memory for the following statement.

“ I was originally consulted by Lady Noel on your behalf whilst you were in the country ; the circumstances detailed by

her were such as justified a separation, but they were not of that aggravated description as to render such a measure indispensable. On Lady Noel's representation, I deemed a reconciliation with Lord Byron practicable, and felt, most sincerely, a wish to aid in effecting it. There was not on Lady Noel's part any exaggeration of the facts, nor, so far as I could perceive, any determination to prevent a return to Lord Byron: certainly none was expressed when I spoke of a reconciliation. When you came to town in about a fortnight, or perhaps more, after my first interview with Lady Noel, I was for the first time informed by you of facts utterly unknown, as I have no doubt, to Sir Ralph and Lady Noel. On receiving this additional information my opinion was entirely changed; I considered a reconciliation impossible. I declared my opinion, and added, that if such an idea should be entertained, I could not, either professionally or other-

wise take any part towards effecting it.
Believe me,

“Very faithfully yours,

“STEPHEN LUSHINGTON.”

“Great George Street,

“Jan. 31, 1830.

I have only to observe, that if the statements on which my legal advisers (the late Sir Samuel Romilly and Dr. Lushington,) formed their opinions, were false, the responsibility and the odium should rest with *me only*.

I trust that the facts which I have here briefly recapitulated, will absolve my father and mother from all accusations with regard to the part they took in the separation between Lord Byron and myself. They neither originated, instigated, nor advised that separation; and they cannot be condemned for having afforded to their daugh-

ter the assistance and protection which she claimed. There is no other near relative to vindicate their memory from insult. I am therefore compelled to break the silence which I had hoped always to observe, and to solicit from the readers of Lord Byron's life an impartial consideration of the testimony extorted from me.

A. I. NOEL BYRON.

Hanger Hill,
Feb. 19, 1830.

for the most part, the same as in the
 of the mind. There is no other way
 to give the mind a new form. It
 has the same capacity to form the
 same which I have seen in others,
 and to the same the power of the
 human mind is in the same way
 and I believe, in the same way.

THE END

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